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CLASSIFICATION SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT NO.

CD NO.

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

DATE DISTR 25 May 1953

SUBJECT Consequences of the Death of Klement Gottwald

NO. OF PAGES 2

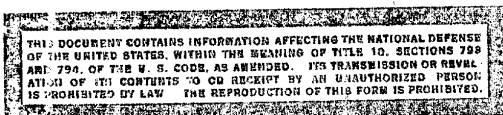
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SUPPLEMENT TO  
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SOURCE

1. Source feels that the death of President Klement Gottwald must have caused considerable nervousness among the Czechoslovak public and aggravated the feeling of uncertainty among the Communists. This increase of insecurity among the Communists would result in a lessening of their political activity.
2. After removing Rudolf Slansky, Gottwald appointed persons absolutely loyal to himself to positions in the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC) and the Government. These included Vilian Kiroly, Alexej Cepicka, Jarol Bacilek, and Antonin Novotny. Source believes that in this way Gottwald succeeded in gaining control, for the most part, of both the Party and the State apparatus. The only person who stood in the way of his becoming absolute master in Czechoslovakia was Prime Minister Antonin Zapotocly. Source feels that, given more time, Gottwald would have also removed Zapotocly and his followers, though in a less brutal way than that used for Slansky.
3. Considerable personal differences existed between Gottwald and Zapotocly, stemming primarily from Zapotocly's criticism of Gottwald's private life. This antipathy had existed since before World War II.
4. Zapotocly's appointment as Prime Minister in June 1948 was dictated by economic and political necessity. Source believes that it was Zapotocly's influence over the workers and popularity among the non-Communists that caused Moscow to order his appointment, contrary to the wishes of Gottwald. Source feels that Moscow intended Gottwald, Zapotocly and Slansky to act as checks on each other. At the time of Slansky's removal, Gottwald transferred a number of officials known to favor Zapotocly, such as Vclav Ksel, Gustav Klement, (fnu) Kolsky, and Jvzen Urban, to less important positions. Thus Zapotocly was to a certain degree isolated in his position as Prime Minister and his position was weakened. At that time Gottwald did not dare to undertake a direct attack on Zapotocly because Zapotocly had supporters in Moscow, including Malenkov and Kuznetsov.

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5. Source believes that, with Gottwald's death, Zapotocky's position will be strengthened. He is faced, however, with the problem of removing Gottwald's followers with whom he is surrounded. Source feels that Zapotocky will act cautiously and will gradually appoint his people to party and government posts rather than instituting a major purge of Gottwald's followers. Since most of the officials will, for opportunistic reasons, serve Zapotocky just as loyally as Gottwald, no great changes in the State and Party apparatus can be expected in the near future.
6. In the opinion of source, it was immaterial whether or not Zapotocky was made President. But Zapotocky's position will be more difficult than Gottwald's was because he will be solely responsible for the management of the country and the party.

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